

Dear Friends,

It is so easy to build up mindlessness during these days of uncertainty as all of us wonder when the restrictions surrounding our lives will be relaxed, even just parks and recreation benefits if you have children. Keeping in mind that our new normal routine at home is undoubtedly plugged in for more hours per day, our heads become exhausted and at the same time enthralled with the power of the digital world.

Into our lives comes the Road to Emmaus story of two despairing disciples who leave their friends and set out in utter despair searching for meaning and healing. It becomes **a transformative walk**. Perhaps sharing the days of pandemic with the gospel lesson for the season after Easter is a remarkable blessing. In it, we have in a relatively short story the markers for how to become a disciple: from having no sight to receiving healing grace to spreading the Good News.

Whatever the blind spots we have developed over the seven weeks of restrictions, our relationship with God requires the same attention that daily exercise does for us to reap the benefits of a faith-based foundation. To be open to God in prayer so that a daily routine is established is a beginning because it grows that all-important relationship with God. And as we know, there are many ways to pray including enjoying the birds fluttering around our bird feeders.

So, if we can take this week's gospel to heart and take the spiritual risk to expect our Risen Christ as our traveling companion, I wish us all very happy trails. Christ is Risen, Indeed. Alleluia!

In Christ, Beverly+

**PRAYER**

As we hear the word that brings salvation, make our hearts burn within us. In the breaking of the bread, open our eyes to recognize the One whose feast it is. Through the presence of every friend and stranger, real to us the face of the Christ who had first to suffer but who has entered now into glory, the Lord Jesus, our Passover and our Peace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

*From Prayers for Sunday and Seasons, Year A, Peter J. Scagnelli, LTP, 1992.*

The lessons of the day are: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116 1-3,10-17; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35.

**TRAVELING COMPANION**

*"I believe that although the two disciples did not recognize Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus recognized them, that he saw them as if they were the only two people in the world. And I believe that the reason why the resurrection is more than just an extraordinary event that took place some two thousand years ago and then was over and done with is that, even as I speak these words and you listen to them, he also sees each of us like that."*

(["Recognizing,"](#) sermon discussion from Frederick Buechner, Frederick Buechner Blog).

Jesus appears to two disciples outside the walls; some seven miles from Jerusalem. They are talking about all the things which have happened. In this particular testimony, we are watching the transition from the crucifixion and the Easter resurrection to the emerging mission of a new community. It is our transition too. The disciples model our own confusion and frustration, longing and sudden sense of recognition.

On the Emmaus Road, the disciples are blinded by their mistaken expectations about what God was doing in Jesus. The story dramatically describes the blindness of the disciples when they encounter Jesus, the curiosity of the disciples when they hear and experience his presence, and finally, the opening of their eyes to see the "Risen Christ" in what, I think, can be described as a conversion or grace-filled experience.

Here is what Luke Timothy Johnson writes about faith: *In Luke-Acts, "faith" combines obedient hearing of the Word and patient endurance. It is not a momentary decision but a commitment of the heart that can grow and mature. Essential to the response of faith is the practice of prayer. Jesus prays throughout his ministry; and teaches his disciples to pray. Luke also provides splendid samples of prayer, showing a people for whom life is defined first of all by its relationship with God. (Luke, Sacra Pagina, 24)*

The Risen Christ is made known to them when Jesus prays the Eucharistic Prayer, the prayer of thanksgiving, when he took bread, blessed bread and broke bread. Sealing the holy ritual in thanksgiving to God for God's divine presence given through the bread and wine, Jesus, as the Risen Host, is recognized. Can we say that we KNOW THE RISEN CHRIST?

Easter is not about believing in a spectacular event long ago, but about participating in a relationship with Jesus. And what we see in Jesus is his passion for a transformed world where love and grace break open for the all people. Thanksgiving, then, is our response and the way to the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Faithfully,

Beverly+